I363.7394
VOLU
c.3

22328650

Environmental
Protection Agency

Office of Public Information
2200 Churchill Road
P.O. Box 19276
Springfield, IL 62794-9276

Spring 1990

ILLINOIS DOCUMENTS

JUL 27 1990

ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY

The Volunteer Advantage

Working Together to Learn About Illinois Lakes

LAKE MONITORING VOLUNTEER PROGRAM ILLINOIS

ILLINOIS VOLUNTEER LAKE MONITORING PROGRAM

The Illinois Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP) was established in 1981 by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) as a cost-effective method of gathering fundamental information on Illinois inland lakes. The VLMP utilizes funds provided by the federal Clean Water Act to achieve the following objectives:

- **Increase citizen knowledge and awareness** of the factors that affect lake quality and useability so they can better understand the lake/watershed eco-system and make informed decisions regarding lake use, protection and enhancement.

- **Encourage development and implementation of sound lake protection and management plans** to improve lake quality for current and future use.

- **Encourage local involvement** in problem solving by promoting local self-reliance and implementation through local resources, and to support these initiatives in lake protection/management and nonpoint source pollution control.

- **Enlist and develop local "grass roots" support** for environmental programs and foster cooperation among citizens, organizations and various units of government.

- **Provide historic data** to help document water quality impacts, support lake management decision-making, target resources to solve identified problems and trigger further investigations; as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of lake protection/management procedures implemented.

- **Provide an initial screening tool** for guiding the implementation of lake protection/restoration techniques and a framework for a technical assistance program for cooperative lake and watershed management projects.

After selecting a lake of their interest, volunteers are trained to measure water clarity using a Secchi disc. A Secchi disc is a weighted metal plate, eight inches in diameter, painted black and white in four alternate quadrants. The Secchi disc, attached to a calibrated rope, is lowered into the water. The depth at which the disc becomes no longer visible is then recorded.

Other data recorded by the volunteers includes field observations such as water color, suspended algae and sediment, aquatic weeds and odor. Weather conditions on the day of sampling as well as during the prior week are also recorded, along with recent lake management activities or other factors which could impact the lake. Volunteers are requested to monitor three or more sites on the lake a minimum of twice per month from May through October.

Year	Volunteers	Lakes
1981	141	87
1982	235	128
1983	206	126
1984	209	145
1985	183	137
1986	156	145
1987	204	150
1988	225	163
1989	225	160
1990	231	164

These figures represent an 84% increase in the number of lakes and a 60% increase in the number of volunteers involved.

VOLUNTEER QUOTES

"I enjoy being in the program. I'm the water superintendent for the city of Coulterville and I've learned quite a bit. This helps me in my work. You've got a good crowd of people involved here."

Jim Aitken
Coulterville, IL
Randolph Lake

"I think it's a good program. We have a 72 acre lake that was built back in the early 1900's. We use it for drinking water here and the study of it really helps us. It's really going to do us some good, because you've got to have a good lake for the drinking water. You're better off with a good lake and this program is going to help us in the future."

Jack Hendrick
Salem, IL
Salem City Reservoir

ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY
3 1129 00582 3133

"My wife and I work as a team on the lake. I do the sampling work and she fills out the report...she rides out in the boat with me. We're always looking out for people throwing garbage around...we can sure tell them. We like to see the environment taken care of."

John Niner
Effingham, IL
Lake Sara

"I get a sense of satisfaction out of the program because I'm helping our lakes. It's an awareness thing, I think. I'm a concerned citizen, worried about environmental hazards."

Philip Gruenewald
Elgin, IL
Lost Island Lake

"I get the satisfaction of knowing I can do something for a lake I really like. I want to keep it safe and healthy for the community... available without restrictions (health advisories) on fishing, etc. I feel like I can make a difference, you know, just one more person as a knotch on the pole. It helps me keep being a part of the community."

Betty Carroll
Ramsey, IL
Ramsey Lake

The VLMP has proven to be a very effective way for citizens to take a more active role in the preservation of Illinois lakes. The program offers people an opportunity to help protect the environment and to develop a better relationship with their government and fellow citizens.

For further information about the program, contact the Division of Water Pollution Control - Planning Section at 217/782-3362 or the IEPA Office of Public Information at 217/782-3397.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 122541177

Printed by the Authority
of the State of Illinois
Job No. 19912 7/90 5000
Printed on Recycled Paper